

parties and make it impossible for outside groups to criticize us in proximity to an election.

There is no chance the courts would uphold this, but fortunately we are not going to give them a chance to rule on this because we are not going to pass this ill-advised legislation.

Mr. President, how much time is left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

I believe the Senator from Illinois wants to speak on a separate subject. The Senator would need to make a unanimous consent request.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRIBUTE TO PENNY SEVERNS OF ILLINOIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on Saturday morning, in the early morning hours, my wife and I received a telephone call that was a shock to us. A dear friend and close political ally of ours, State Senator Penny Severns of Decatur, IL, had succumbed to cancer in the early morning hours.

I have literally known Penny Severns for over 25 years, since she was a college student. I followed her political career. We had become close and fast friends. The outpouring of genuine warmth and affection for Penny that we have heard over the last few days since the announcement of her death has been amazing.

Penny Severns was 46 years old. A little over 3½ years ago, she was running for Lieutenant Governor in the State of Illinois, and she discovered during the course of the campaign that she had breast cancer. I think most people, upon hearing that they had cancer, would stop in their tracks, would not take another day on the job, would head for the hospital and the doctor and say that the rest of this could wait. But not Penny Severns. She announced that she was going through the chemotherapy and radiation and then would return to the campaign trail. And she did.

I will tell you, in doing that, she inspired so many of us because her strength, her caring, her spirit, were just so obvious. She finished that campaign and was reelected to the State Senate and announced last year she was going to run for secretary of state in our State of Illinois. She filed her petitions, and within a week or so it was discovered she had another cancerous tumor, and in December she went into the hospital to have it removed. She went through the radiation and chemotherapy afterwards and had a very tough time. Unfortunately, she succumbed to the cancer in the early morning hours last Saturday.

It is amazing to me how a young Democratic State Senator like this could attract the kind of friends she did in politics. Penny was not wishy-

washy; when she believed in something, she stood up for it. Yet, if you listened to Republicans and Democrats alike who have come forward to praise her for her career, you understand that something unique is happening here.

There is so much empty praise in politics. We call one another "honorable" when we are not even sure that we are. But in this case, people are coming forward to praise State Senator Penny Severns because she truly was unique, not just because she fought on so many important political issues and gave all of her strength in doing that, but because of her last fight, which was her personal fight against cancer, and the fact that she just would not give up and would not give in.

Breast cancer has taken a toll on her family. She lost a younger sister to breast cancer a few years ago, and her twin sister is in remission from breast cancer today. Penny dedicated herself, in the closing years of her service, to arguing for more medical research when it came to breast cancer—not just for her family, but for everybody. That is part of her legacy. She will be remembered for that good fight and so many others.

I have to be honest with the Presiding Officer and the other Members. I would rather not be here at this moment. I would rather be in Decatur, IL, because in just a few hours there will be a memorial service for Penny Severns. My wife will be there, and I wish I could be there, too. But if there is one person in Illinois who would understand why I had to be here on the campaign finance reform debate, it was Penny Severns. I am going to miss her and so will a lot of people in Illinois.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. GRAMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota, Mr. GRAMS, is recognized.

Mr. GRAMS. I ask unanimous consent to speak up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### WHY WE MUST RETURN ANY BUDGET SURPLUS TO THE TAXPAYERS

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my strong disappointment as my colleagues waffle on our commitment to allow working Americans to keep a little more of their own money.

I rise as well, Mr. President, to make the case for returning any potential budget surplus to the taxpayers.

Mr. President, I was shocked to pick up the Washington Times on February 18 and find the headline "Senate GOP leaders give up on tax cuts."

Having been elected on a pledge to reduce taxes for the working families of my state, the idea that we would so quickly abandon a core principle of the Republican Party is a folly of considerable proportions, one I believe would abandon good public policy.

In all the legislative dust that is kicked up in Washington, someone has to consider the impact of high taxes and spending, and speak up for the people who pay the bills: the taxpayers.

When the Republican Conference met on February 11 to outline our budget priorities for the coming year, I joined many of my colleagues in stressing the need for continued tax relief. I did not leave the room with the belief that we had abandoned the taxpayers.

Yet that is precisely what the Conference's "Outline of Basic Principles and Objectives" does, because under the Conference guidelines, tax relief for hard-working Americans would be nearly impossible to achieve.

Mr. President, since its very beginnings in the 1850s, the Republican Party has dedicated itself to the pursuit of individual and states' rights and a restricted role of government in economic and social life.

In 1856, the slogan of the new party was "Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Speech, Free Man." It is still our firm belief that a person owns himself, his labor, and the fruit of his labor, and the right of individuals to achieve the best that is within themselves as long as they respect the rights of others.

The fundamental goal of the Republican Party is to keep government from becoming too big, too intrusive, to keep it from growing too far out of control.

We constantly strive to make it smaller, waste less, and deliver more, believing that the government cannot do everything for everyone; it cannot ensure "social justice" through the redistribution of private income.

These two different approaches of governance are indeed a choice of two futures: A choice between small government and big government; a choice between fiscal discipline and irresponsibility; a choice between individual freedom and servitude; a choice between personal responsibility and dependency; a choice between the preservation of traditional American values versus the intervention of government into our family life; a choice of long-term economic prosperity and short-term benefits for special interest groups, at the expense of the insolvency of the nation.

I think history has proven that whenever we have stuck to Republican principles, the people and the nation prosper, freedom and liberty flourish; whenever we abandon these principles for short-term political gains, it makes matters far worse for both our Party and our country.

Here are two examples. Facing a \$2 billion deficit and economic recession in 1932, the Hoover Administration approved a plan to drastically raise individual and corporate income taxes.

Personal exemptions were sharply reduced and the maximum tax rate increased from 25 percent to 63 percent. The estate tax was doubled, and the gift tax was restored. Yet the federal revenue declined and the nation was deeply in recession.